

PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE,

A N D

W E E K L Y A D V E R T I S E R.

W E D N E S D A Y, M A R C H 24, 1779.

To the CITIZENS of PENNSYLVANIA.
Friends and Fellow-Citizens,

THE MEMBERS of the REPUBLICAN SOCIETY beg leave to address you on a subject of the utmost importance to you, and to posterity; and at a time when this important subject demands your most serious and attentive consideration.

But who are the Members of this Republican Society?

—Our names are subscribed to this address.—We have, and can have no common interest with one another, but that which we have also with you. We are of different occupations; of different sects of religion; and have different views in life. No factions or private system can comprehend us all; but one powerful source of attraction unites us.—The Liberty and Happiness of Pennsylvania. To accomplish and secure these great ends, we embarked in opposition to the power and tyranny of Great-Britain; and, in the several stations and characters in which it has been our lot to act, have continued uniform and steady in that opposition, through every hardship and risk which attended it. It is our fixed determination to persevere in the same line of conduct. But while we oppose tyranny from a foreign power, we should think ourselves lost to every sense of duty and of shame, were we tamely to acquiesce in a system of government, which, in our opinion, will introduce the same monster, so destructive of humanity, among ourselves. Such a system we conceive the Constitution formed by the late Convention to be. We mean not that, in all its parts, it is repugnant to the principles of liberty: Though, while some articles remain, we are convinced, upon the most impartial examination, that its general tendency and operation will be to join the qualities of the different extremes of bad government. It will produce general weakness, inactivity and confusion; intermixed with sudden and violent fits of despotism, injustice and cruelty. Cannot a discrimination be made between its salutary and its pernicious properties? We have the instruction of ancient and modern times for our guides: We have the conduct of the other States in the union for our example. The wisdom and patriotism of Pennsylvania is not inferior to the wisdom and patriotism of other commonwealths. Shall it be said, to our disgrace, that we enjoy an inferior portion of their genuine effects? The supposition is too degrading. An opportunity is now presented to you to shew that it is false. You are called upon by your Representatives in Assembly to testify your sentiments, on the first Tuesday of April next, whether you will choose to labour under the burthen and disadvantageous parts of the Constitution; or will substitute in their place such establishments, as will insure to you the blessings of freedom, happiness and independence. Let not such a glorious occasion be lost. Perhaps it may never return. Rivetted oppression, rendered doubly insupportable by unavailing repentance and regret, may be the only portion left you. The distant probability that this may be your case and ours fills us with the most anxious concern; and induces us to communicate to you a number of particulars, which are either unknown or misrepresented. Our honest freedom; we are well assured, you will take in good part. Our situation in the capital gives us an opportunity of being thoroughly acquainted with facts and characters and schemes, which are not seen, or are seen through a disguise, in the more distant places of the State. We should be inexcusable, if, in a matter so momentous and interesting to us all, we omitted to act that part towards you, which, in similar circumstances, we would wish you to act towards us. You cannot be happy, if we are miserable: We cannot be miserable, if you are happy. Embarked thus on the same bottom, let us join in every thing for procuring a prosperous voyage, and for avoiding shipwreck on the rocks and quick-sands that lie in our course.

You have been told (for the infamous report has been circulated industriously) that the opposition to the constitution is supported and conducted only by Tories, and persons disaffected to the liberties and independence of the United States. We know, and we feel the representation to be false. Some of us have been honoured with seats in your Councils, and in the Councils of the Continent; and in the darkest seasons have neither betrayed nor deserted our trusts, when we sat with halts around our necks. Others of us have fought at your head and by your side in the field; and have braved, in conjunction with you, the utmost terrors of the foe. In our several stations and situations in life, all of us have acted against the common enemy, and in support of the common cause; and all of us have given unequivocal proofs of our attachment to the principles of freedom. What we say of ourselves, we know to be true of others in the same opposition. We call upon the most audacious of those who calumniate us, to disprove what we now assert to you and to the public. By the uniform tenor of our conduct we are willing to stand or fall.

Ambition, the love of power and of office, have been assigned as the motives of our opposition to the Constitution. How injuriously this charge has been made against us you may easily determine, when we inform you (what our enemies themselves cannot deny) that the first offices in government have been offered to members of this society, and have been rejected by them: Not that such members are more inflexible to honour and profit than others; but because views of honour and profit could operate no change upon their principles and conduct. This cannot be said of all who are now in office.

We wish you to embrace every occasion of enquiring into these matters, and of forming your judgments of

men and characters, not from the vehemence of their expressions, when there is no danger in uttering them with vehemence, but from the calm and undaunted firmness, with which they speak and act in trying circumstances, when dangers and difficulties surround and threaten to overwhelm them.

Permit us now to state, with the openness and candour which should be always observed among fellow-citizens, our objections to some of the articles (and those some of the most important ones too) in the Constitution; together with the amendments we wish to see made; and those mischiefs and calamities which are likely to happen, if no alteration shall take place.

Our first and principal objection to the Constitution formed by the late Convention is—That it vests the whole legislative authority in a single body, without any controul.—Many arguments might be offered against this. Let us introduce one by the declaration of an admired Judge, whose manly candour must charm every generous mind. “It is the glory and happiness of our excellent Constitution, that, to prevent any injustice, no man is to be concluded by the first judgment; but that, if he apprehends himself to be aggrieved, he has another Court, to which he may resort for relief. For my own part, I can say it is a consideration of great comfort to me, that if I do err, my judgment is not conclusive to the party; but my mistake will be rectified, and so no injustice be done.” Is less skill required—should less caution be observed, in framing laws, than in explaining them? Are mistakes less likely to be made—are they less dangerous—is it less necessary to prevent or to rectify them in the former case, than in the latter? Which is of most importance—to preserve the fountain, or to preserve the streams from becoming turbid?

But there is a still greater danger, than that arising from mistakes and inaccuracies, to be apprehended from a single body possessed of the supreme legislative power. We should be supported by high authority were we to say, “it is no better than a tyranny.” Its natural tendency towards despotism is too apparent to be proved, or to be denied. It is admitted by the strongest implication in many parts of the Constitution. Whence, upon any other supposition, the numerous checks (as they have been called, though in truth they are no checks) upon the Assembly? Whence to much jealousy? Those who discovered it well knew that they were instituting a dangerous power.

It is said that to introduce a Legislative Council is to introduce a House of Lords. The insects of faction have been busy in buzzing this about your ears. No calumny was ever more gross or more futile. Trace it; and you will find it altogether founded in deception and falsehood. Ask those deceivers to shew you any reason, why a Legislative Council, chosen by the people, is any more a House of Lords, than an Assembly chosen by the people. You see them bewildered, and unable to give a reasonable answer. For surely an Assembly and a Council, mutually controuled by each other, are less dangerous, and have less resemblance to a despotic Aristocracy, than a single Assembly, without any constitutional controul. The checks mentioned in the Constitution are really no controul; for if the Assembly choose to disregard them, to whom shall we apply for relief? To the Assembly? Shall the lamb, upon whom the devouring jaws of the wolf are opened, apply to the wolf for protection? With equal propriety might an injured people apply to the oppressors for redress. No. They may go on violating the Constitution step by step, till nothing but a revolution can put a stop to their career.

There is not in the whole science of politics a more solid or a more important maxim than this, “That of all Governments those are the best, which, by the NATURAL EFFECT of their original Constitutions, are frequently renewed or drawn back to their first principles.” If the Assembly depart from the principles of the Constitution, it would be drawn back by a Legislative Council. If the Council should depart from them, it would be drawn back by the Assembly. But when a single Legislature is disposed to depart from them, there is no power that can confine it within its proper bounds.

It is objected, that disputes and contentions would naturally arise between the two Houses; and would stop or retard the public business. Perfection is in vain sought for in the works of man. Every inconvenience cannot be avoided: A lesser should be submitted to, in order to prevent a greater. The danger of dissensions is not to be compared to the danger of tyranny. But the truth is, that there is little to be apprehended upon that head. The Council and Assembly would both draw their power from the same source—from the people, the fountain of all authority. They could not have opposite interests, which are the causes of frequent contests. As both would be dependent upon the people, both would be cautious not to neglect or oppose the public welfare. If any divisions should take place, they could not be lasting; because the people would have it in their power, at the next election, to remove the offenders.

It is not proposed that there should be, as there were in Rome, and as there are in Venice and other Aristocratic States, TWO DISTINCT ORDERS OF MEN, one of them possessing peculiar powers and privileges not depending upon the authority of the people—Such an establishment would be equally disagreeable and equally pernicious to us and to you. We disavow the injurious imputation: It is replete with malice and slander. May merit and the

unbiased voice of the people be the only titles to distinction ever known in Pennsylvania.

In all the most celebrated free Governments of antiquity, the Legislatures were composed of different branches. In all the other American States, excepting Georgia, the Legislatures consist of distinct bodies of men. Whence then the clamour of novelty, which has been raised and propagated with so much ignorance, or so much dishonesty? A single Legislature is the novelty: And the example of Pennsylvania will serve as a *bedcon*, rather than a *precedent*. For while the other States enjoy happiness and tranquility under their governments, Pennsylvania exhibits mournful scenes of weakness and distraction.

The mode in which the Courts of Justice are established, is another part of the Constitution to which we have weighty objections. The Judges hold their offices, and enjoy their salaries, upon too precarious a footing. That Judges were not appointed during good behaviour has been long the subject of well-grounded complaint, not only in Pennsylvania, but in every other part of America. It is truly astonishing that the foundation of this complaint was not removed, when we had such a favourable opportunity of removing it. No State can enjoy internal peace and security, unless the administration of justice is able and impartial; and unless the Judges are placed in a situation to maintain dignified and independent characters. But how can we expect dignity and independence in Judges, who are liable to be tossed about by every varying gale of politics; and who can be saved from destruction only by swimming along with every successive torrent of party. The decisions of courts will cease to be the voice of law and justice, and will become the echo of faction and violence. This is a subject which most nearly concerns every one, who sets the least value upon his own safety, or that of his posterity. Your fortunes, and lives, and liberties, are all liable to be affected by the judgments of the Courts. How distressing and melancholy must the reflection be, that, while Judges have their salaries only at pleasure, and their commissions only for the term of a few years, your liberties, and fortunes, and lives, may be sacrificed to a party, tho’ you have done nothing to forfeit them to the law.

What shall we say of the Council of Censors? Here indeed is a novelty; and a novelty of the most dangerous and alarming kind. Our Constitution-makers, not satisfied with the habitual despotism of a single and uncontrouled Legislature, have appointed stated seasons for extraordinary efforts of lawless power. They have instituted a jubilee of tyranny, to be celebrated at the end of every seven years. Glorious period! When the foundations of government shall be torn up! When anarchy and licentiousness and force shall roam unawed and unrestrained! When there shall be no fixed laws, to which you can appeal for the justification of your conduct! When there shall be no Courts, to which you can have recourse for protection! When trials by jury, those odious obstructions that lie in the way of tyrants, shall be happily removed! Are you pleased with the prospect? If you wish not to feel it realized by direful experience, lay hold eagerly upon the present opportunity which is offered you of preventing it, by voting for a new Convention to abolish this part of the Constitution.

After what we have already mentioned with regard to the foregoing parts of the Constitution, you will be at no loss to discover our sentiments concerning that part of it, which requires from every one, in any office, as oath “not to do or say any thing, directly or indirectly, that shall be prejudicial or injurious to the Constitution as established by the Convention.” This we consider as a most daring invasion upon the inherent, the unalienable and the indefeasible right of every freeman to judge and act for himself. This oath is not only required of all officers by the Constitution; but, by a *separate ordinance*, which the Convention had no authority to make, it was extorted from all the citizens of Pennsylvania, before they could exercise the first right of Freemen—that of choosing their Legislators. A set of men, chosen by not a tenth part of the inhabitants of the State, met at Philadelphia, and called themselves Representatives of the Freemen of Pennsylvania. Conscious that they did not stand upon the broad and firm basis of the affections of the people, but determined to continue their ill-founded power as long as possible, they and their successors have pursued, and still pursue every measure calculated to weaken and divide the whig interest of the State. Their emissaries are busy through the country, representing every one in opposition to their government as opposed to the welfare of the public, and attached either to the cause of Great-Britain, or that of the Proprietary family. The authors of those calumnies know them to be false; but they serve a temporary purpose. They deceive and mislead those, who are not acquainted with the true state of things, or the real characters of men. Judge impartially of men and things; and then your own good sense will tell you what part to take. Placemen will talk to you loudly and warmly against a Convention. The charms of Power may bewitch them; but they ought not to blind you. The sweets of office produce surprising effects upon some minds. Many officers under the government once thought with us; and some of them were as vehement, both in public and private, as those who now address you. What change, and whether any, may have been wrought upon them by the high places of trust to which they have since been raised let their own conduct determine. We doubt not but each of you, in your neighbourhood, can point to

[For the remainder see the fourth page.]

THE House having resolved itself into a Committee of Supply, Mr. Ord in the Chair,

Mr. Butler, previous to his intended motion, thought it his duty to wipe off the aspersions which had been thrown on the Board of Admiralty by Gentlemen, who had roundly asserted, that, with respect to the navy, Parliament had been imposed on by false information. He insisted that the accounts laid before the House last year, of the number of ships ready for sea, were perfectly just; and that there had been two ships of the line fit for service, at the time the accounts had been delivered in, which had not been included. When Admiral Keppel returned from his first cruise, there were 17 more in readiness, seven of which immediately joined the grand fleet, and two were prevented from doing the like, by a distemper which unfortunately broke out among the crews; so that the charges of neglect, or of having endeavoured to impose, had been without foundation. He then moved that a supply of 70,000 seamen, including marines, be granted to his Majesty, for the service of the year 1779.

Mr. Temple Luttrell did not seem convinced by the preceding gentleman, that the charges against the Admiralty were ill founded; and after a recapitulation of many arguments which had been made on the same subject last week, undertook to prove the assertion he made on Tuesday, that upwards of 400,000*l.* granted for the service of the navy had been embezzled. For this purpose he caused some extracts from the journals to be read, by which it appeared, that 40,000 seamen had been voted in the year 1771, and 1,920,000*l.* for their support; that one month with another, during that year, there had been mustered 31,000 and odd seamen in his Majesty's fleet; a number upwards of 8000 short of the establishment voted and provided for by Parliament. A saving, upon a deficiency of 8000 men, should amount to 384,000*l.* and as there was a deficiency of near 9000 men, the saving might be supposed to have exceeded 400,000*l.* by a considerable sum; and yet the treasurer of the navy gave credit, for a surplus in his hands only, of 84,000*l.*

He wished to be understood, that when he made his assertion relative to the embezzlement, it was not with a view to clog the wheels of government.

He then took occasion to advert to the action of the 27th of July last, between the *Brest* fleet and Admiral Keppel; contending, that it was highly proper to enquire into the cause of our failure of success in that day's engagement, as it would be dangerous to entrust the command of a fleet on which so much depended, to two officers, who, however zealous for the public good, should not be suffered to command together again upon the same expedition.

Admiral Keppel here produced a short written speech, and begged the indulgence of the House while he read it. The honour of the British flag, he maintained, had not been tarnished in his hands; nor would he admit, that, according to the circumstances, the battle could have been attended with more success, if it was to be fought over again: He allowed, that when two fleets meet, with a determined resolution to fight on both sides, to conquer or to perish, then a decisive action may be expected; but the same consequence would not follow, if one fleet was as industrious to avoid an engagement, as the other to bring it on. He confessed he had been much surprised, when an officer under his command had made an appeal to the public, on account of some insinuations which had been thrown out against him: For his part, he never was the author of any insinuation to the prejudice of the honourable gentleman: he had been inclined to think well of his conduct; for, while he entertained no doubt of the essential (courage) he imputed every seeming error in a commander to misfortune or necessity; that had been his opinion on the day of action, and he had consequently passed over in silence anything which might have given him cause of displeasure; as it had ever been a maxim with him to promote the service, more by encouragement and example, than by severity. He could not, however, omit saying, that discipline had been wounded so essentially; that, if Administration should want his further services, he would declare that he would not sail again with the Gentleman alluded to. He was perfectly easy, with regard to any consequence that might attend an enquiry; but, as the public might be injured if he was at this crisis to answer all the questions that might be put to him, he begged he might be permitted to observe a strict silence till he should be called upon in a proper place.

Sir Hugh Palliser was not less easy with regard to any consequences from a fair enquiry; he was satisfied that he had done his duty, and had omitted or neglected nothing that could contribute to the destruction of our enemies. He felt himself, however, greatly distressed, that his conduct should be censured by a man, whose friendship he had courted, and deemed his pride. His appeal to the public seemed to give the Hon. Admiral umbrage; but, he would assure the House, he had not determined upon that mode of vindication, till others, which would have been more proper, had been solicited in vain. As soon as he read the attacks upon his character, he waited on the Admiral, not only as his commander, but as his friend; complained to him of the hardships men must undergo, who, while they are fighting their country's battles abroad, have their characters murdered at home; and therefore applied to the justice and friendship of his Admiral to rescue his reputation from obloquy, by publicly contradicting the reports which were propagated to his prejudice; he was, however, greatly surprised to find that the Hon. Admiral, instead of complying with his request, justified the grounds on which the aspersions he complained of were built; and soon perceived, that he had nothing to expect in that way from his commander: Urged, therefore, by that desire which every man of honour has to preserve his character, he had been forced to have recourse to the only mode left him, to prevent the malicious from succeeding in their intent.

Admiral Keppel stood up again, and did not seem pleased that Sir Hugh should mention what passed in private conversations; he would not follow the example; he disclaimed all fore-knowledge of the attack made upon him in print; but insisted, that it was the name of Hugh Palliser, in the Morning Post, that had injured the writer most. He seemed to insinuate, however, something of neglect, by saying, that the signal for sailing into the Victory's wake, and for forming the line, had been flying from three o'clock till eight.

Mr. T. Luttrell was going to pursue the path trod by the two Admirals, when Lord Mulgrave calling to order, and causing the motion to be read, put an end to the digression.

Lord North rose to refute the charge of embezzling. He premised, that the vote of 4*l.* per man always pro-

vided for four different objects; for the men's wages, the ordinance of the ship, the victualling, and wear and tear; and the full sum must always be issued from the treasury to the admiralty. When, by disarming or other means, the number of hands in the navy is reduced, all the savings that ensue are not returned to the treasury, but applied to naval purposes; by which the navy debts are diminished; and consequently, so much money is saved to the nation, as it would be obliged to raise to pay those debts, which are discharged by this saving. The honourable Gentleman might therefore say, that, instead of 400,000*l.* having been embezzled in the year 1771, the nation had been so much in pocket; as that sum being laid out in building, or otherwise, had prevented a call on the people for money, to answer the ends for which that sum had been expended. He did not blame the Hon. Gentleman for making the enquiry; he had a right to do it, nor did he clog the wheels of government by his opposition. The fly in the omelette had a right to be on the coach wheel, as it thought proper to be there; but did not for all that clog it, or impede the progress of the carriage.

Mr. Welbore Ellis defended the same side of the question, from the mode of proceeding in the public offices.

Mr. Temple Luttrell remained still dissatisfied.

Mr. Charles Fox contended, that, notwithstanding the boasts of administration, we had been inferior to the French at sea, in every quarter of the globe. In America, we had been avowed so before the arrival of Admiral Byron; in the Mediterranean we were so still; in the channel, we certainly had been far inferior to France, when Admiral Keppel was sent out with no more than twenty sail of the line, at a time that there were twenty-seven in *Brest* water: In India, he would be glad to hear from the Ministry how we stood: In the West-Indies only, we had been said to be superior; and yet, there the island of Dominica had been taken from us. He would nevertheless give his hearty assent to the motion, if it were even for a greater number of men, as he would omit nothing that could put his country in such a posture of defence as should secure it against any attack whatsoever.

Lord Mulgrave held that there were circumstances where general laws could not, and perhaps ought not, to be complied with; and a line should be drawn betwixt calamity and criminality. If the exerted efforts of this country could not make it equal to the enemy, we ought then to set our distresses down to the account of misfortune and calamity, and not lay them at the doors of Administration.

Mr. T. Townshend took up, in a warm manner, the indignity offered to the House, in the person of Mr. Luttrell, when Lord North compared him to the fly in the omelette.

Mr. Bailey closed the debate with an account of the defenceless state of Jamaica, and the actual preparations going on at Hispaniola, where there are twenty thousand land forces.

Mr. T. Luttrell got up again, and having mentioned Sicily and Egypt, Lord Mulgrave laughed; which Mr. Luttrell observing, said, he had not travelled the North Pole, nor kept company with bears; he had often heard a horse laugh, and heard one then; though he might as well have taken its denomination from another animal.

Lord Mulgrave was happy to have furnished the hon. gentleman with an opportunity to exert his ridiculous faculties; and, to keep the hon. gentleman in good humour, he would appoint him dancing master to the bear; he might mount him as he pleased, either as an horse or an ass, without being under any apprehension that he would wish to mount him on the animal that springs from both (the mule).

Mr. Butler, to satisfy Mr. Luttrell, relative to the motion he made on Tuesday, for the last weekly returns to the Admiralty, informed the Committee, that in the month of November there were in actual pay, on board his Majesty's ships of war, 77,000 seamen including marines.

The question was put a quarter after seven o'clock, and agreed to without any opposition; as well as the next for granting 4*l.* per man per month, for thirteen months, for the pay of said 77,000 men.

Mr. Butler next moved, that a sum not exceeding 4*l.* per man per month, be granted for support of the men, for 1779; which, being unanimously agreed to, the Committee broke up, and the House immediately adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, Monday, Dec. 14.

Several estimates of accounts of troops were presented, as were the accounts relative to Spanish and Portugal coin for the use of the army.

Ordered, That they do lie on the table.

When the House had formed itself into a Committee of Supply, Mr. Jenkinson claimed their indulgence, while he should attempt to officiate for the noble Lord at the head of the war department, to whose abilities he paid the highest compliments. He then produced the army estimates for the establishment of the year 1779, which he moved should consist of 160,000 men, a number exceeding that of the present year by 14,000. He proposed plans for recruiting the regiments, by having two companies to each, which were to be a kind of corps de reserve, from whence the battalions might be reinforced: This mode to take place immediately in all the regiments, except those under the convention of Saratoga; in them, when they should be set at liberty. He had not the least doubt, but he should be able to raise as many men as would be sufficient to make up the establishment for the ensuing year, as the recruiting service had been attended with amazing success, more men having been recruited last year, than during any of the three former; for in eleven months only, from last October, there had been raised, including the new corps, between 22 and 23,000 men.

Enumerating then the British forces in America, in the East and West-Indies, the navy, &c. he boasted that we had full 300,000 men in our pay; a force superior to any now on foot in any country in Europe, and exceeded only by that which was maintained by France in the most brilliant part of Louis XIVth's reign.

General Burgoyne could not repress the anguish he felt at the sight thrown on his army at Boston, by excepting the regiments that compose it out of the proposed regulation: Upwards of 50 officers belonging to that corps were then in town, some having been exchanged, and others released under the treaty, they were in a capacity of serving their country, if administration did not tie their hands by shutting them out from the common lot of the rest of their brother officers. The soldiers at Boston deserve the most grateful treatment from their country; for however criminal their General might have been, they had done every thing that could be performed by men; they had fought more than once, and were reduced to the sad task

of surrendering, only when they were opposed by an army of six times their number; for at the time that it was reported in England, that he had 12,000 regulars under his command, he had not half that number; and when he capitulated, he was at the head of only 3500 effective men, and was attacked by an army of 17,000 strong.

He assented to the augmentation, because we should want all the men we could raise; but he would not consent that any should be sent to America to continue the war, which he declared, taught and corrected by experience, he believed could never be terminated with success on our side. He should be happy to hear that Sir Henry Clinton was to continue in the command of the army; but as it was reported that he was returning home, for not having been properly reinforced, it was proper to know before we voted an army for America, who was the person to command it; and also who was to have the direction of the war, as under the present American Secretary no success was to be expected. He then mentioned the private letter which Lord George Germaine had laid before the House, and which it was said had slipped into the bag without the knowledge of his Lordship; and wished sincerely that the whole of his private correspondence were laid before the House, that a fair enquiry might take place into his conduct, and that of the noble Lord.

Mr. Jenkinson declared, that he had not the least intention of throwing a slight on the army at Boston; his only motive for leaving the regiments out of the regulation until they shall have been released, was, that the public money which would come to their share for raising recruits, might not be raised at that time, when it must remain useless in the hands of the paymaster-general, as no recruits could be sent to them in their present situation.

Lord George Germaine was sorry that the Hon. General's constant digression from the business before the House, to his own personal concerns, made it necessary for him to trouble the committee upon a subject foreign to the question on the table. When the papers relative to the northern expedition had been laid upon the table, he really did not know that the letter called by the Hon. General a private letter had been among them; and yet he would say that if he had known it, he probably would not have laid it aside, as he deemed it an instrument more of a public than a private nature, and if the House thought proper to have the whole of the correspondence brought before them, he should not have the least objection. With regard to the person who was to have the command in America, he knew of no other than Sir Henry Clinton; nor had that officer desired to be recalled in disgust; on the contrary, in his last letter, in which he asked leave to return, he said his aid de camp would explain his motive, which was, that he wished to state his ideas of the future conduct of the war in person; and that, if leave might be granted him to come to England, he would be ready to return to his army in a week after he should have conferred with administration. With regard to his continuance in office, the very moment he could learn that the House wished to see him retire, he would lay down his employments with pleasure; and if the Hon. General could find a pleasure in seeing him resign, he should certainly have that pleasure if the army now in America should be ordered to abandon it. As to reinforcements which Gentlemen apprehend were to be sent to America, he knew of none; none were ordered for that service, except the recruits, which were to fill up the vacancies of the regiments.

Mr. T. Townshend lamented the destruction of our trade, and the ruin of our manufactures, which alone made the recruiting service so successful, and deplored the misfortunes of this country, whose rulers knew so little how to manage the affairs of the realm, that with a force of 300,000 men, not to be equalled in any modern State in Europe, they had not been able to bring to a happy conclusion, a war in which we had been contending only with the British colonies.

Lord Adam Gordon approved the new plan for filling up the different regiments; but wished to learn how Ministers intended to raise the men; the mode of raising the new levies had been attended with very great expence and inconvenience to the Gentlemen concerned; and though it was a very pleasing circumstance to have an army of 160,000 men, yet he was afraid it was on paper alone we should find them; for the country had been so drained, that it would, in his opinion, be at present a very difficult matter to raise the additional 14,000.

Mr. Fox inveighed against the plan of pursuing the war in America, where, he believed, we should never be able to effect a suppression of the rebellion; there was a certain fatality in the American war, which corresponded with that of Xerxes against Greece. Lord North, he compared to the Minister of that Prince, who, vindicating himself, might have said, I promised to build a bridge over the Hellespont; I built it; I promised to sail through Mount Athos; I sailed thro' it; I promised to supply your army with all necessaries; I performed my promise; and yet the whole army of near two millions of men mouldered away; Persia was stripped of its inhabitants, and its resources exhausted; and Greece, notwithstanding, maintained its independence. The army in America was a weight on the nation, as it could do nothing there for the public good, where the people were so firm in support of the new government; but, if the troops were to be withdrawn, and sent upon an expedition against some part of the dominions of France, their blows would then tell, and we should reap important advantages from their operation even towards the reduction of America, which he contended was not to be conquered but in France. He next charged Administration with having sown divisions in the fleet, by bringing a prosecution against a man they knew to be innocent, on a charge the most frivolous and unjust, he protested against the idea, that abandoning the war in America, and acknowledging the independence of the colonies, were one and the same thing: In his opinion, they were two distinct ideas; and the army might be withdrawn, even with a view of destroying, by operations in another country, that very independence which could not be shaken in America.

Governor Johnstone widely differed from Mr. Fox; for he could find no difference between withdrawing the army, and acknowledging the independence of America, the consequences of such a step could not be but obvious to every gentleman; Nova-Scotia must be attacked, Newfoundland invaded, Florida overrun, and Canada become subject to the Congress. The West-Indies could be of no use to us, as the trade from the islands being obliged to pass through the Gulf of Florida, for fear of the French at Cape Nicholas Mole, the Gibraltar of the West-Indies must be exposed to the American privateers, if we had no port or fleet there to protect it. Another reason for not

withdrawing the army was, that the new Government of America, freed from an apprehension of the English, would turn their minds towards strengthening their government, which at present is in a tottering situation; for, he would be bold to say, that the affection of the people had been greatly weaned from Congress, from the moment that body had altered the form of their new constitution. The abjuration oath imposed on all electors in the colonies, was stretching a prerogative which the people had never imparted or sanctified; and so great was the discontent in the province of Pennsylvania, that out of 32,000 electors which had voted for the first Congress, only 600 and odd had taken the abjuration oath, to qualify them to vote for another Congress. In the province of New-England, the Whigs and Tories were nearly equal in the provincial meeting; that the Whigs had only a majority of two. As to an invasion of France, the gentlemen then in the house, who had been on the expedition against St. Cas, could best judge of the probability of success in such an undertaking.

Many other gentlemen spoke. The motions on the estimates, except in some particulars relating to the militia, were then carried without a division: The rest were deferred till Wednesday.

WILLIAMSBURG (Virginia) March 12.
The Surprize, Capt. Winingham, is arrived at Portsmouth in nine days from St. Eustatia, who informs that the Weasel, a British sloop of war, mounting 18 guns, was taken by a french ship off the coast, without firing a gun.

PHILADELPHIA. PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS, in just punishment of our manifold transgressions, it hath pleased the Supreme Disposer of all events to visit these United States with a calamitous war, through which his divine providence hath hitherto in a wonderful manner conducted us, so that we might acknowledge that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong: AND WHEREAS, notwithstanding the chastisements received and benefits bestowed, too few have been sufficiently awakened to a sense of their guilt, or warmed with gratitude, or taught to amend their lives and turn from their sins, that so he might turn from his wrath: AND WHEREAS, from a consciousness of what we have merited at his hands, and an apprehension that the malevolence of our disappointed enemies, like the incredulity of Pharaoh, may be used as the scourge of Omnipotence to vindicate his slighted Majesty, there is reason to fear that he may permit much of our land to become the prey of the spoiler, our borders to be ravaged, and our habitations destroyed:

Resolved, That it be recommended to the several States to appoint the first Thursday in May next to be a day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer to Almighty God, that he will be pleased to avert those impending calamities which we have but too well deserved: That he will grant us his grace to repent of our sins, and amend our lives according to his holy word: That he will continue that wonderful protection which hath led us through the paths of danger and distress: That he will be a husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless children, who weep over the barbarities of a savage enemy: That he will grant us patience in suffering, and fortitude in adversity: That he will inspire us with humility, moderation, and gratitude in prosperous circumstances: That he will give wisdom to our councils, firmness to our resolutions, and victory to our arms: That he will bless the labours of the husbandman, and pour forth abundance, so that we may enjoy the fruits of the earth in due season: That he will cause union, harmony, and mutual confidence to prevail throughout these States: That he will bestow on our great ally all those blessings which may enable him to be gloriously instrumental in protecting the rights of mankind, and promoting the happiness of his subjects: That he will bountifully continue his paternal care to the Commander in Chief, and the officers and soldiers of the United States: That he will grant the blessings of peace to all contending nations, freedom to those who are in bondage, and comfort to the afflicted: That he will diffuse useful knowledge, extend the influence of true religion, and give us that peace of mind which the world cannot give: That he will be our shield in the day of battle, our comforter in the hour of death, and our kind parent and merciful judge through time and through eternity.

Done in CONGRESS, this twentieth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine, and in the third year of our independence.

JOHN JAY, President.

Attest. CHARLES THOMSON, Secretary.
PROCLAMATION.
BY HIS EXCELLENCY
GEORGE WASHINGTON, Esquire,
General and Commander in Chief of the Forces of the United States of America.

WHEREAS it hath been represented, that many of those soldiers, who have been induced from divers motives to desert their corps, and are now dispersed in different parts of these states, having seen their error, would be glad to return to their duty, but are restrained by the fear of punishment. In order to quiet such apprehensions, and give them an opportunity to put in practice those good dispositions, I do hereby proclaim full pardon to all those, who shall rejoin their respective corps by the first of May next; at the same time declaring to all such, who shall neglect to avail themselves of the present offer of mercy, and who shall persist in their delinquency beyond the period herein appointed for their return, that the most effectual measures shall be pursued to detect them, wherefore concealed, and to bring them to the most rigorous and exemplary punishment.

GIVEN, at Head-Quarters, Middle-Brook, March 10th, 1779.

G. WASHINGTON.

On the 25th ult. the brigantine Tom, Captain Paul Huxley, from Boston, bound to Baltimore, was chased on shore near Chinotague by two British privateers, where the soon bilged. Her sails, rigging, and some other articles, were saved.

An armed brig is arrived at Baltimore from Boston, and carried in with her a schooner which she captured in her passage, bound from New-York to the West-Indies, laden with lumber. A number of letters were found on board this prize, in which Great-Britain is represented to be roused from her lethargy, and determined to prosecute the American war with the utmost vigour, and the most determined perseverance; for which purpose, it is asserted, a large force is coming from Great-Britain, Ire-

land and Germany, early in the spring; that new orders have been received by General Clinton, and new modes adopted, for the next campaign, which is expected to prove bloody and decisive.

The Hon. *Raculus Lowmde*, and *William Henry Drayton*, Esquires, are elected Delegates to Congress for the state of South-Carolina, for the year ensuing, in the room of the Hon. *Edward Rutledge*, and *Thomas Bee*, Esquires, who have resigned.

WANTED IMMEDIATELY,
TWO or three HANDS, who can be well recommended and are perfectly acquainted with the Casting Business; advantageous Terms will be offered, by applying to JOHN NANCARROW, at ABRAHAM MITCHELL'S, in Third-street, Philadelphia. WANTED also, a Quantity of broken Iron Castings, for which a handsome Price will be given. Enquire as above, or at the STEEL-FURNACE, the Corner of Eighth and Walnut streets.

A few COPIES of the following, being the newest Publication from England, may be had at ROBERT BELL'S Book-store, next Door to St. Paul's Church, in Third-street, Philadelphia.

THE PUPIL OF PLEASURE, in a SERIES of LETTERS, exhibiting the Adventures of a Man of Birth, Rank, Figure, Fortune, and Character, ardent in the Pursuit of Pleasure, much delighted with, attracted by, and formed upon the *Chesterfieldian System*. Two Volumes complete in One. BY COUNTRY MELOTH.

* * * This modern historical Work is peculiarly necessary for all those Ladies and Gentlemen, who either have read, or intend to read Lord Chesterfield's Letters.

N. B. Chambaud's, Boyer's, Nugent's, Dyche's, Bailey's, Martin's, Johnson's, Entick's, Ashe's, Schrevelius's, Hedericus's, Ainsworth's, Littleton's, Cole's, and Young's Dictionaries, with all the valuable Delphini and other Classics, whether in Greek or Latin, may also be had at said Bell's Book-store. Also Holy Bibles of various Kinds. Likewise Dilworth's Spelling Books by the Dozen, Hundred or Thousand.

†† FRENCH and ENGLISH GRAMMARS, FRENCH and ENGLISH DICTIONARIES, with great Variety of Jewels and Diamonds for Sentimentalists, may also be had at said Bell's Book-store, in Third-street.

WANTED,
A JOURNEYMAN PAPER-MAKER, a sober Man, that understands the Business, in all its Branches; such a one will meet with good Encouragement. For further Particulars, apply to Mr. ROBERT AITKEN, Bookseller, opposite the Coffee-house, in Front-street; or to Messieurs STYNER and CIST, at their Printing-Office in Second street.

JOHN DEAN, BOOKBINDER, Again carries on his Business, in the Corner House, in Latitia Court and Black-Horse-Alley.

AS he had the pleasure to please such Ladies and Gentlemen as formerly employed him in the various branches of the French, Italian, and English methods of Binding and Gilding; likewise account books ruled and bound in vellum, parchment, and leather, respectfully solicits their former favours. Such Ladies and Gentlemen as please to favour him with their commands, he hopes will not think their work the worse, if done by one that served America under his Excellency General Washington, in the most hazardous part of the war, in 1776 and 1777.

N. B. As he means at present to be unincumbered with any other business than Bookbinding alone, such as employ him may expect to have their work done with the greatest neatness and dispatch.

Said DEAN wants an APPRENTICE. As the Bookbinding business promises as fair for a genteel livelihood as any other trade in this State, such parent who is willing to bind a son may expect to have him taught his trade in REALITY.

Also two JOURNEYMEN will meet with generous wages and constant employment.

ALL Persons indebted to the Estate of JOHN THOMSON, late of Cheltenham Township, Philadelphia County, deceased, are hereby desired to make speedy Payment to the Subscriber, living in said Township; and all those that have any Demands against the said Estate, are desired to bring in their Accounts, properly attested, that they may be settled and paid by SAMUEL LEECH, Administrator.

THIRTY DOLLARS REWARD.
WAS LOST about a Fortnight ago, between this City and Newhamny-Ferry, Part of a Sheet of Continental Money, containing about Four Hundred Dollars; any Person finding the same, and delivering it to the Subscriber in Reading, or to BENJAMIN McVEACH, at Frankford, shall have the above Reward. PETER ASTON, Com. Purchases. March 23, 1779.

BY ORDER OF ORPHAN'S COURT,
Will be exposed to SALE, by Way of public VENDUE, on Friday next, the 26th Day of March, on the Premises, A CERTAIN Piece or Tract of LAND, late of Samuel ABBERNATHY, deceased, situate in Tinicum Township, Bucks County, containing 264 Acres of Land, 140 of which are cleared, the Remainder well timbered; on the Premises are a Log Dwelling-House, Frame Barn and Waggon Shed, a bearing Orchard. Due Attendance will be given, and the Terms of Payment made known at the Time and Place of Sale, by J. W. ESTHER ABBERNATHY, Administrator.

AT the subscriber's SCHOOL, in Latitia Court, Philadelphia, Children and Youth are taught, as usual, the modern Elements of Speech; the Principles of Writing, Arithmetic, Geometry, and Mathematics in general; the Practice of Surveying, and Navigation in particular; and Foreigners also, instructed in the United States' vernacular, with grammatical propriety:—By his Friends' obliged, and the Public's devoted servant, JOHN HEFFERNAN.

WAS taken up on suspicion, in Towamensing township, Philadelphia county, by the subscribers, on the 27th of February last, a certain John Kinney, as he called himself, of a middle stature, with some grey hairs in his head; wore a brown old fashioned coat, and a greyish cloth waistcoat, made in the fashion. As he was conducting from the magistrate to goal he made his escape from the constable, and left behind him two calico gowns and a petticoat, supposed to be stolen, the owners of which are desired to come, prove their property, pay charges and take them away, in six weeks from the date hereof, otherwise they will be sold for the costs, by MICHAEL MOYER, ISRAEL TENNIS.

Whoever secures said Kinney in goal, on giving notice to the above persons, shall have TWENTY DOLLARS Reward.

Philadelphia, March 17, 1779.
CAME to the plantation of the subscriber, living in Lower-Dublin township, Philadelphia county, a brown MARE, about 8 years old, about 14 hands high, with a star in her forehead. Whoever has lost the said mare, may have her again, paying reasonable charges, on application to JOHN WAGGONER.

TO BE SOLD,
ABOUT two thousand five hundred acres of good LAND, in the county of Northumberland, situated on the east branch of Saquehanna, 13 miles above the town of Sunbury. The two emissions called out of circulation will be taken in payment. The whole will be sold together, or in tracts of about three hundred acres. Enquire of the PAINTERS.

* * * The Members of the *Republican Society* are desired to meet this Evening at Duff's Tavern, on particular Business.

Just published, and to be SOLD by
HALL AND SELLERS,
PROCEEDINGS of the SUPREME EXECUTIVE COUNCIL in the case of Major General ARNOLD.

JUST PRINTED, and to be SOLD by the Hundred, Dozen, or single, by

STYNER AND CIST,
At the North-east Corner of Race and Second-streets,
The newest AMERICAN PRIMER.
Also, The New-England PRIMER enlarged.

TO BE SOLD,
By PUBLIC VENDUE, on Thursday, the First of April, at the dwelling house of the subscriber, in Montgomery township, Philadelphia county.

TWO valuable MARES, cows, sheep, and swine; a cart, and a pair of large oxen; a waggon almost new, plough, harrow, gears, men and womens saddles; a large ten plate stove; also a variety of household and kitchen furniture, too tedious to mention. The sale to begin at ten o'clock, where due attendance will be given by EDWARD BATHOLOMEW.

* * * Said Batholomew hath on hand about 2000 weight of seal leather, of the best quality, for sale. All those that are indebted to him on book, are desired to pay off their accounts in three weeks from this ninth day of March, 1779.

To be SOLD by Public Vendue, on Friday, the 26th day of March next, on the premises, at one o'clock in the afternoon,

THAT well known valuable plantation and tract of land on which Robert Henderson, deceased, formerly dwelt, and now in the tenure of John Kerr, situate in the township of Buckingham, in Bucks county, bounded on the York road, which divides it from Thomas Watson's land, leading from Philadelphia to Corryell's Ferry, and about 26 miles from the former, and joining lands of Israel Pemberton, containing about 500 acres of land, about 200 of which is cleared, the remainder well timbered, and the whole in good repair; there is about 30 acres of excellent watered meadow by a never failing stream running through the same, and more may be made; the plough land is divided into six fields, most of which watered; likewise two good orchards: There is on the premises a two story stone dwelling house, two rooms on a floor, with a good cellar under the whole, a good log kitchen with two rooms on the floor, a spring-house near the house, with sundry other never failing springs near the same; a large stone barn and stables, a good cow-house, and sundry other necessary buildings. The terms of sale will be made known on the day of sale, by

MARGARET HENDERSON.

N. B. There is an extraordinary mill seat nearly joining the York road, on that standing stream which waters the abovementioned meadow, &c.

To be SOLD by public VENDUE, the Fifth day of April next, at ten o'clock in the morning, on the premises, in Redminster township, Bucks county, near Col. Keichlein's,

A PLANTATION, containing 93 acres, 10 acres thereof are good meadow, house and barn on it; horses, a new waggon and farming utensils. For further particulars, enquire of MICHAEL SHUBART, in Philadelphia, or the subscriber, on the premises. HENRY SLESMAN.

TO be sold by the subscriber, a grist-mill with an excellent stream of water and tract of land, containing about 70 acres, situated on the banks of Schuylkill, in Blockley township, well known by the name of Schuylkill mill; bounded by lands belonging to George Gray, and William Hamilton, Esquires; 10 acres of good watered meadow, about 18 acres of well timbered woodland, the remainder is very fertile and fit for tilling; what makes this place the more valuable is, that a thallop may come up to the mill door, with a thousand bushels of grain; an inexhaustible quantity of mud, of the best quality for manuring the land, may be got at a very small expence; likewise an excellent quarry may be opened of the best building stone, lying on the river and at the mouth of the creek, where vessels may be loaded without the expence of hauling a stone. Its beautiful situation on the river is sufficient to recommend it to the gentleman, or the man of business. JOSEPH JONES.

* * * For terms enquire of said Jones, living in Blockley township, or Mr. Jacob Barge, in Philadelphia. \$5w.

TO BE SOLD,
A COUNTRY SEAT, five miles from this city, near the Falls of Schuylkill, on a road leading from thence to Germantown:

THE situation is high and healthy, and has a very extensive prospect: It contains thirty acres, near half of which is woodland, has a commodious house erected thereon, almost new, with a large kitchen garden well fenced, good stables and chair-house, and a young bearing orchard, of good fruit, about 4 acres. If not sold, it will be let to a tenant with a small family, who understands gardening and fruit trees. Enquire of the PRINTERS.

Philadelphia, March 3, 1779.

ALL persons indebted to the estate of John Tannenberger, late of this city, Baker, deceased, are desired to make immediate payment; and those who have any demands against said estate, are desired to bring in their accounts, properly attested, in order that the same may be adjusted, in four weeks from this date. JOHN PETERS, CONRAD GERHART, Executors.

* * * A few Hundred Pounds to be left on good security. P. S. Was left at the said dwelling-house, An Eight-day CLOCK, without a case; whoever has lost the same, by applying as above, proving property, may have it again.

STOLEN, on the 26th of February last, at night, out of the subscriber's stable, in Middletown, Chester county, a bright bay HORSE, between 14 and 15 hands high, well built, both paces and trots, but most natural to trot, in pretty good order, newly shod before, has some white hairs in his forehead, and a white saddle mark on the off side, his mane and tail both black, has a disorder called the heaving of the lungs, and a bad cough. Whoever secures said horse and thief, so that the owner may get his horse, and the thief brought to justice, shall have Forty Dollars reward for both, or Twenty Dollars for the horse, and reasonable charges, paid by ROBERT McCLELLAN.

TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD.
STOLEN on the 11th inst. (March) out of the subscriber's house, at the Northern Liberty Ferry, the following articles, viz. One pair of silver knee buckles, one stock buckle, one hat, one blue sailor's jacket, and four or five hundred Dollars continental money: The persons suspected are four sailors, viz. William Jones, about 5 feet 10 inches high; had on a red jacket, a red pair of trowsers, and a round hat: Nathaniel Elliot, nearly about the same height, red haired; had on a blue jacket, and striped trowsers: Owen Hickey, 5 feet 6 inches high; likewise had on a blue jacket, and striped trowsers: One Kelly, about the same height as Hickey, and same dress: They are supposed to have gone towards New-England. Whoever apprehends the above persons, and secures them in goal, shall receive the aforesaid reward, paid by JESSE WILLIAMSON.

men who, some time ago, were zealous and active against the Constitution, but have lately been softened, by the insinuating operations of places and salaries and perquisites, into tameness and acquiescence, and even approbation. What dependence can be put in the characters and principles of such men, we leave you to judge.

Some of them, perhaps, will not be so barefaced as to deny, in direct terms, what they have formerly asserted: But they will endeavour to accomplish the same purpose by indirect and more artful methods. They will not tell you, that there should be no alterations made in the Constitution; but they will say, that this is not the proper time for making them. So placemen, and the minions of placemen, talked at the beginning of the present controversy with Great-Britain. They did not pretend to say, that the claims and conduct of the British Parliament were not unjust and oppressive; but they insinuated, that it was improper, at that time, to contend against them. Others will allege you have not felt oppression yet; and it is soon enough to guard against it, when it comes to your door. Those who wished to prevent the union of America told you, in the same manner, when the port of Boston was shut, and the charter of Massachusetts-Bay violated, wait till your ports are shut up, and your charter broken, and then indeed it will be time to bestir yourselves. Had you listened to the insidious advice, what would have become of the liberties of America? Experiments of slavery are dangerous: They are such as freemen will be ever unwilling to make.

A third class will apparently admit the justice of the measure; but will find fault with the manner of carrying it on. When the Assembly seem disposed to promote it, they will say that it should originate by petitions from the people. When petitions are handed about among the people, they will say, you should wait till your representatives in Assembly signify their sense upon the subject.

Every expedient will be used to turn your eyes from the great object, on which they ought to be fixed. But be not deceived. The important question, now in agitation, involves in it your nearest and dearest interests. Now is the time to consider it with all the anxious attention that it deserves. You have an opportunity now before you of avoiding those dangers with which you are threatened. If you do not embrace it, the blame will be upon yourselves; but the consequences will reach and affect us all. We repeat, what we have already mentioned, that those who subscribe this address have no common interest with one another, but that which they have also with you. Insinuations and fly whispers, that we wish to establish an interest separate from that of the State, are futile and groundless. Read over the list of the subscribers; enquire into our occupations and professions, and different walks of life, and you will be convinced that the imputation contains in it the greatest absurdity. *Are we all desirous of becoming Lords?* But let us tell you one thing; and remember that we now tell it to you. If there are any among us, in whose breasts the seeds of an ambition to tyrannize over their fellow-citizens lie latent, they will be cherished and cultivated by continuing the present Constitution. We have already seen how easy the task is for any character to rise into power and consequence under it. And there are some of us, who think not so meanly of ourselves, as to dread any rivalry from those who are now in office. Trust not us—trust no man—trust no body of men with uncontrolled power. If any of those, who address you, should become, at some future period, debauched by power under the present Constitution, and use it for their own aggrandisement, instead of the public good, you will then recollect, but the recollection may be then too late, that we have now given you an honest, and a most solemn warning against them.

RICHARD BACHE, Chairman.

Samuel Morris, jun.	James White,
Samuel Meredith,	Joshua Humphreys, jun.
Thomas Fitzsimons,	Benjamin Rusby,
John Wilcocks,	Jacob Rusby,
John Cadwalader,	Thomas Leaming, jun.
George Clymer,	Thomas Franklyn,
John Nixon,	John M'ale,
Joseph Cowperthwaite,	Peter Scull,
Benjamin G. Eyre,	Robert Morris,
James Caldwell,	Thomas Miffin,
George Rofs,	Iaac Melcher,
James Wilson,	Jonathan Miffin, jun.
John Murray,	Peter Z. Lloyd,
William Allibone,	William Gray,
Thomas M'lers,	John Chaloner,
Joseph Moulder,	Jacob Hiltzheimer,
Whitehead Humphreys,	John Benezet,
Jacob Shallus,	J. M. Nesbitt,
E. Bidelle,	Henry Hill,
Sharp Delany,	Samuel Howell, jun.
George Meade,	Lewis Weiss,
Francis C. Hassenclever,	George Woods,
James Meale,	John Colbourn,
Nathaniel Falconer,	Bernard Dougherty,
William Von Phul,	Philip Wager,
Peter Baynton,	Lambert Cadwalader,
Mark Bird,	George Campbell,
Thomas Smith,	James Crawford,
William Alricks,	Samuel Caldwell,
Stephen Chambers,	James Read,
Alexander Nesbitt,	John Brown,
G. Noarth,	John Baker,
John Patton,	Alexander Foster,
John Shee,	John White,
Samuel Nicholas,	Thomas Forest,
Andrew Bunner,	Francis Hopkinson,
John Donaldson,	James Craig, jun.
John Lardner,	John Parke,
Robert Roberts,	Samuel Miles,
Charles Thompson,	Ephraim Blaine.
William Govett,	

To the CITIZENS OF PENNSYLVANIA.

Friends and Fellow-Citizens,
WHEN our last Address to you was printed, and ready to be published, we were informed of the following Resolution of the Honourable House of Assembly, made on the 27th day of last month.

“Whereas a resolve was passed by the Assembly of this Commonwealth on the 28th day of November last, that the sense of the people should be taken, on the first Tuesday of April next, for and concerning the calling a Convention, for the determination of certain points in the Constitution of this State.

“And whereas a very considerable and respectable number of the inhabitants of this Commonwealth are much dissatisfied with the said resolution, and have petitioned us that the same should be rescinded, or not carried into execution at the time or in the manner prescribed: Therefore,

“Resolved, That this House do rescind the said resolves, and the said resolves are hereby rescinded.”

We are justified in saying that this resolution is a direct and unwarrantable infringement of the faith of the Legislature of Pennsylvania, which has been plighted for a long time past to the good inhabitants of this Commonwealth, that a fair opportunity should be given them of expressing their sentiments, unbiassed and unfettered, concerning the Constitution established by the late Convention. The resolution is also contrary to those leading principles which should direct the Representatives of a free people.

Those States only can be denominated free, which are governed under a Constitution to which the citizens have given their consent. Have the citizens of Pennsylvania ever given their consent to the Constitution framed by the late Convention? Have they ever had an opportunity of declaring whether it was satisfactory to them or not? Has not this opportunity been delayed and protracted in the most unfair and disingenuous manner, and under the most flimsy and trifling pretences? And have not the Assembly now, as far as in them lies, deprived us of ever enjoying this opportunity?

But our comfort is, that it is not in the power of the Assembly to deprive us of it. The right of giving our sense of the government under which we are to live is not a boon of the Assembly, and consequently is what the Assembly cannot take away. This right did not take its origin from the resolution of the 28th day of November last, as is insinuated in a petition and remonstrance which has been published on this occasion: It was independent of any such resolution. All that the resolution effected was, to remove from before the citizens of this State those obstructions which had been so unjustly thrown in their way by the Convention, and by the first Assembly that sat under the Constitution. And had not the Assembly an undoubted power to remedy the injustice that had been done? Was the faith of the Assembly unlawfully plighted? When the inhabitants of Pennsylvania had been so long robbed, by their former Representatives, of the exercise of the inherent and inestimable right of giving their voice concerning the Constitution,—was it criminal in the present Assembly to vote that they should be robbed of the exercise of this right no longer? Was not this measure indispensably obligatory upon those who were deputed to maintain the rights of a free people? Why then has this resolution, so necessary and so obligatory, been rescinded?

Is it because “a very considerable and respectable number of the inhabitants of this Commonwealth are dissatisfied with it, and have petitioned that it should be rescinded?” Does that number compose the majority? Though this is far from being the case, let us admit, for a moment, that it does. Have even the majority a right to exclude the minority from every opportunity of giving their sentiments concerning the Constitution? If the majority, indeed, are satisfied with it,—it then becomes the duty of the minority to acquiesce. But surely the minority are entitled to have this previous point ascertained. This, however, has never been done: The engagement of the Assembly that it should be done has been most unwarrantably broken by the rescinding resolution; and the dissatisfaction of a considerable and respectable number of the inhabitants is held forth to the public, as a sanction for what the dissatisfaction of an undisputed majority could not justify.

But it is not even suggested or insinuated, that the petitions and remonstrances presented to the House were subscribed by a majority of their constituents. The members from some of the counties might have thought so; and this, we are authorized to say, was the reason why they voted, contrary to their own judgments, for rescinding the unanimous resolution of the 28th of November. Are twelve or fourteen or sixteen thousand (and none will pretend that the petitions have been signed by a greater number) a majority of the free citizens of Pennsylvania? We have been taught to consider those, who paid taxes and were entitled to vote, as amounting to fifty or sixty thousand. We believe that the most authentic documents will support us in this opinion. And shall the petitions and remonstrances of a third or a fourth part of the State be conclusive or binding upon two-third or three-fourth parts of it?

When we consider the particular situation of affairs in this State, and the particular circumstances and artifice with which the petitions and remonstrances were carried round among the people, it is matter of surprise to us, that a greater number were not procured to subscribe them. It has probably been a matter of disagreeable surprise to those, whose all depends upon the continuance of the Constitution: If such were satisfied, as they boast they are, that a majority of the State are in favour of the present government,—why should they be so unwilling to see the majority called forth to decide a question, the determination of which would, as it is confessed on all hands, lay the minority under an obligation to submit: Whence all this anxiety in them to prevent a decision, which, they say, would certainly be in their favour, and which would consequently produce to them so much and such well founded joy?

The resolution for taking the sense of the people about a new Convention was a reasonable and necessary one. It passed unanimously; and all parties in the House engaged, and seemed disposed to contribute every thing in their power to carry the measure effectually into execution; it being considered, and justly, as a measure which, however the question concerning a new Convention might be determined, would lay a rational foundation of peace, harmony, vigour and happiness in the State.

Those in opposition to the Constitution were now satisfied. They meant nothing, and they suspected nothing unfair. They were willing to wait for the impartial and unbiassed votes of their fellow citizens. Was the same candour observed on the other side? This question will be best resolved by the answers, which it is in your power to give to questions we are now about to propose to you.

How were the petitions and remonstrances against taking the sense of the people originated? How and in what manner were draughts of them circulated through the different counties? Were not some of those draughts enclosed in letters from persons high in office under the

present government, and from some whose daily bread depends upon their offices? Were they not carried round the country by Lieutenants and Sub-Lieutenants, Assistants and Collectors of the public money? Were not great caution and circumspection employed to keep the scheme concealed from such, as were known to have taken an active part against the Constitution? Were you not told, when the petitions were presented to you, that the opposition to the Constitution arose, and was supported only by a junto of gentlemen in Philadelphia, who wished to trample upon the farmers and mechanics, to establish a wicked Aristocracy, and to introduce a House of Lords, hoping to become members of it? Were you not told, that all the best Whigs in the Commonwealth were averse to a change? Was not this doctrine preached to you from some of the pulpits? Were not some of you asked this question—*are you for a House of Lords or against one?*—And when you answered, as every sensible freeman would, that you were against one,—were you not then requested to sign the petition and remonstrance?

You know what answers can, with truth, be given to the foregoing enquiries? If they can be answered in the affirmative, we have the best reason in the world for asking,—“was candour observed on the other side?” And you have the best reason in the world to complain of the misrepresentations by which you have been deceived.

But, be these things as they may, the vote of the Assembly, rescinding the resolution of the 28th of November, was, on every supposition, equally improper and unreasonable. For, as we have mentioned before, whether those that disapprove of the Constitution form the greater or lesser number of the inhabitants of the State, they have, in either case, an inherent right, as freemen, to demand an opportunity of declaring their sentiments upon the subject. If this opportunity is not granted, how can it be certainly known on which side the majority stands?

But the last vote of the Assembly is justly liable to exception on another account. The purport of the petitions, as represented by the Assembly themselves, was, EITHER that the resolution of the 28th of November should be rescinded, OR that it should not “be carried into execution at the time or in the manner prescribed.” From this state of the matter it appears clearly that the petitioners gave the Assembly their choice, either to rescind the resolution altogether, or only to alter it with regard to the time and manner of carrying it into effect. Now when the Assembly had clearly, even according to the sentiments expressed in the petitions, their choice of two things,—how came they to chuse the worst? There might have been reason for delaying this measure; such as the prospect of another campaign, of which there was but little probability when the resolution was passed. There might have been, and we believe there was, good reason for altering some things respecting the manner of the election. But does it follow from thence, that there should be no election at all?

We are informed, from the best authority, that the Assembly took no pains to ascertain the authenticity or genuineness of the subscription to the petitions; and that several of them afforded room for strong suspicions in this respect. Many names were signed evidently in the same hand-writing. It is true that every person, who has a right to petition, cannot write, and may therefore employ another to set down his name: But it is equally true that, upon such occasions, especially when parties run high, there have been such things as signing Committees, who have subscribed to petitions the names of persons without any authority. It becomes, for this reason, a matter of importance to enquire into the truth of the case, when such appearances are discovered. This the Assembly have not done.

When all these things are weighed coolly and dispassionately, we trust our fellow-citizens will join in opinion with us, and will act with us, upon the opinion that the late vote of the Assembly, instead of producing any languor or remissness in the opposition to the Constitution, should operate as a powerful incitement with those who disapprove of it, to redouble their diligence in every wise and vigorous measure for bringing about alterations and amendments. That vote shows likewise the fears entertained by the friends of the Constitution from a free and unbiassed declaration of the sense of the people; and, consequently, the hopes with which the prospect of such a declaration should animate us. They say they are the majority. If they believe what they say; how can they account for that terror, with which they behold every step taken by those, whom they affect to call the minority, in order to bring this matter to an undisputed decision? If they are the majority, would not a superior number of votes given, in a fair election, against a new Convention; evince this point much more satisfactorily, and much more to their advantage, than any number of subscribers procured to any number of petitions, in the manner and under the circumstances under which those laid before the Assembly have been procured? If they are really the majority; why do they not join with us in endeavouring to bring the matter to a speedy trial? In one word; if they are satisfied that they are the majority, it is difficult to assign a reason why they postpone their own triumphs: If they are conscious that they are the minority, it is easy to discover the reasons why they refuse to do us justice.

To conclude: Essential imperfections in the present Constitution have been unanswerably pointed out in the publications heretofore submitted to you. Experience has since unfolded many others. In future publications, we mean to lay before you the numerous deviations already made by the legislative and executive powers of the State from this boasted Constitution. In the mean while, permit us anxiously and earnestly to exhort you to bear in mind, that we are in pursuit of the noblest object for which we can contend, a free and happy government.—Suffer not therefore threats and menaces on the one hand, or the more dangerous arts and allurements of interested men in power on the other, to intimidate or seduce you from persevering in this virtuous contest. Conscious that we are acting from the purest and most disinterested motives, and that we are supported by the soundest principles of liberty and public virtue, let not any unfavourable appearances either warp our attachments, or abate our vigilance; but let us look forward to that happy day, when the present prejudices, so artfully raised, and so industriously supported, shall be removed by the irresistible power of truth;—and when that day, which we trust is not far distant, shall arrive, then, and not till then, will the inhabitants of Pennsylvania be truly independent, free and happy.

By order of the Society,
RICHARD BACHE, Chairman.